his Ministry's views on the issue of reservation for religious minorities in higher educational institutions;

the reasons for the low presence of minorities in these institutes; and

the steps to remove this imbalance?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

The Ministry is of the view that any proposal for reservation has to be with the concurrence of all concerned,

There are socio-economic reasons for the low presence of minorities in these institutes.

Under the Constitution of India, minorities have been given the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Scheme for remedial coaching to students of minority communities and for their training to appear in competitive examinations like NET and for services are also being implemented by the Government and its agencies.

Universities with potential excellence

1218. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that five universities have been declared as universities with potential for. excellence;

if so, the details thereof;

the criteria for declaring such universities;

the details of the proposals received from Tamil Nadu for declaring more universities as ones with excellence; and

the decision taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) to (c) The University Grants Commission (UGC) has, so far, identified five Universities with Potential for Excellence (UPE), namely, the Jadavpur University, the Jawaharlal Nehru University, the University of Hyderabad, the University of Madras and the University of Pune. Each University is eligible for an

assistance of Rs. 30.00 (thirty) crores over a period of five years, in addition to its annual development grants. Academic, administrative and financial governance, including accreditation by the NAAC (National Assessment and Accreditation Council), are the broad parameters on which a University is selected as a UPE, Factors such as student enrolment, location, research output, among others, are given weightages for the purpose of selecting a UPE.

(d) and (e) In Tamil Nadu, the Madras University has been declared as "University with Potential for Excellence". Subsequently, the proposals in this regard have been received by the UGC from the Anna University, Bharathidasan University, Gandhigram Rural Institute, Gandhigram (Deemed University), Madurai Kamraj University and Annamalai University, which are under the consideration of the UGC, alongwith other similar proposals.

Literacy Rate

1219. SHRI EKANATH K. THAKUR: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

whether it is a fact that Uttar Pradesh and Bihar have 61 of the 150 low literacy districts in the country;

whether it is a fact that the rest of the low literacy districts are spread over Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, etc.; and

if so, the steps Government propose to take to raise the literacy rate in these districts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI MD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) Yes, Sir.

The rest of the low literacy districts are spread in States of Arunachal Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Orissa, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal.

Based on the 2001 Census Report, the National Literacy Mission Authority in its General Council meeting held on 11.4.2005 has decided to focus, in a phased manner, on 150 lowest literacy districts in the country.

In the first phase, special literacy project proposals for low literacy